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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: BALKH GOVERNOR ATTA ON POSSIBLE KARZAI-ABDULLAH
POWER-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS

REF: A. A. KABUL 3167
[B. B. KABUL 3391](#)

Classified By: Interagency Provincial Affairs Deputy Coordinator Hoyt Y
ee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Governor of Afghanistan's northern province of Balkh, Mohammed Atta Noor, enumerated preconditions for any power-sharing arrangement between the forces of President Karzai and his main challenger, Abdullah Abdullah, in the event that there is no/runoff election. The preconditions include an elaborate scheme for allocating central and provincial government leadership positions, and reserving for Abdullah any &Number 28 executive position in the government. If election authorities should declare a runoff election in the coming days, Atta believes that Karzai government should yield to an interim administration to ensure stability. Atta reiterated his long-standing criticism of &paltry8 international assistance efforts in Afghanistan's north; acknowledged that his security officials are confronted by increased efforts by unnamed opponents to de-stabilize the province; and claimed the central government is withholding funds for completion of infrastructure projects in Balkh. End summary

CONDITIONS FOR POWER-SHARING WITH KARZAI

[1](#)2. (C) During Senior Civilian Representative-North's October 11 introduction of the new State Officer for the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e-Sharif, Governor Atta Mohammed Noor, a supporter of presidential challenger Abdullah Abdullah, acknowledged significant on-going back-channel communications between the Abdullah and Karzai camps. He outlined specific terms that he said the Abdullah camp had communicated it would require should it accept persistent entreaties by the Karzai administration) including appeals through Atta himself) to participate in a power-sharing arrangement. The requirements included the following:

-- a stipulation that, in the event of any decision to implement a power-sharing arrangement that would provide for an additional strong executive position (with Karzai continuing to serve as President), Abdullah be the person to fill that position. (Note: Atta did not use the term &prime minister.8 End Note)

-- an elaborate division of the appointed leadership of ministries and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. Specifically, he emphasized that the Abdullah camp would need to have leadership of at least one of the following pairs of ministries and organizations: Interior or Defense, Finance or Foreign Affairs, Independent Directorate of Local Governance or the Administrative Affairs Office of

the President, Office of the Attorney General or the Supreme Court, and the Afghan Central Bank or the Afghan Red Crescent Society. (Note: Like ministers and the Attorney General, Supreme Court members are appointed by the President and approved by the Wolesi Jirga. End Note) In the case of the Interior and Defense Ministries, he specified that the Minister and First Deputy Minister positions should be divided between Karzai and Abdullah supporters. (For example, if Karzai forces were to name the Defense Minister, Abdullah forces would name the First Deputy Minister of Defense.)

-- allocation of provincial leadership positions on the basis of votes received for the respective candidates in each particular province. Accordingly, the party whose candidate received the most votes in the presidential election within a particular province would have the right to select the governor of that province; the second-place finisher would appoint the Deputy Governor; the third-place finisher would appoint the third highest official, etc.
-- that Karzai sign a document accepting these conditions and share this document with the international community.

¶3. (C) Atta said he preferred the description &power-sharing8 to &coalition8 government. He believes a &coalition8 arrangement would imply a government organized along ethnic lines. He suggested that &power-sharing8 is more accurate in describing cooperation between two leading candidates, one that does not imply a coalition of different ethnic interests. Atta disavowed any interest in serving as a minister himself, but said he would welcome the opportunity to continue serving as a governor. Regardless, he made clear

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that he intended to continue to play an influential political role in the development of the Afghan nation.

IF THERE IS A PRESIDENTIAL RUNOFF

¶4. (C) If election authorities declare a runoff election in the coming days, Atta believes that the Karzai government should yield to an interim administration to ensure stability, pending full resolution of the presidential elections. In addition, he said, the membership of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) should change. (Comment: The President has the right to appoint IEC members, so presumably Atta would envision an interim administration, rather than Karzai, selecting a new IEC. End comment) According to Atta, these steps would guard against a repeat of the voting fraud that characterized the first round of the elections, which Atta said was abetted by the Karzai administration's control over the IEC.

TIME FOR CHANGE

¶5. (C) Regardless of the outcome of the presidential elections, Atta called for a drastic change in the central government's approach to building a cohesive Afghan nation. Specifically, he said that the new government would have to address high-level corruption in some meaningful and transparent way; and start assisting, rather than undermining, provincial governments.

POLITICAL REPRISALS AGAINST BALKH?

¶6. (C) PRT Officer solicited Atta,s comments on claims in a recent local press article that Atta,s open support for Abdullah,s candidacy had prompted the central government to slow or block implementation of centrally-funded infrastructure projects in Balkh. Atta said the claims were accurate and cited three examples of the Karzai government's &revenge8 against him: suspension of its central government budget allocations to the Governor's office, a

mid-stream cutoff of funding for a number of Mazar-e-Sharif municipal road-paving projects, and withholding of \$USD 8 or 10 million⁸ needed to complete construction of a Balkh University agricultural faculty building at a new campus site on the outskirts of Mazar-e-Sharif.

SECURITY SITUATION IN BALKH PROVINCE

¶17. (C) On the question of security in Balkh province, Atta walked a fine line. He said security was still good, but acknowledged that his security officials have to address increased efforts to de-stabilize the province. He again alleged (ref A) that unnamed political opponents⁸ are financing the arming of local civilians to create problems for Governor Atta.⁸ He charged that these opponents not only are arming civilians, but are promising them political positions as an eventual reward for their service in challenging him. Despite these efforts to undermine stability, Atta claimed that Balkh is still managing to maintain security in the province.

¶18. (C) Addressing the possibility of violence in the event Karzai is declared the first-round winner of the presidential election, Atta repeated allegations that the central government has directly armed civilians with the goal of creating instability in Balkh and other areas in the north. He said such actions, coupled with Karzai's subversion of the democratic process, suggest that the Karzai camp's intention is to do whatever it takes to win a second term. If that is their intention and they succeed in achieving their goal by anti-democratic means, he warned that Abdullah supporters would not sit without any reaction.⁸

¶19. (C) Atta challenged the U.S. and the international community to work against electoral fraud and corruption, which undermine the democratic process. Senior Civilian Rep reinforced U.S. support and respect for a fair and transparent election process managed by the IEC and Electoral Complaints Commission.

MORE ASSISTANCE FOR THE NORTH

¶10. (C) Atta graciously welcomed the new PRT Officer and

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wished him success. But he took the opportunity to reiterate his dissatisfaction with the PRT and the international community. He decried the allocation of the lion's share of assistance to unstable (and often narcotics-producing) provinces in southern and eastern Afghanistan. He urged greater assistance to northern provinces like Balkh, which had done a good job in maintaining security and in reducing poppy cultivation. Failure to reward good performance ultimately would strengthen the hand of those seeking to sow instability in the region. Atta also urged that international assistance support infrastructure projects, rather than protocol-type seminars and conferences.⁸ (Note: USAID will soon begin an assessment of the many requests for infrastructure projects in the north. End Note) He conceded the utility of international assistance to long-term training/capacity-building projects as well.

¶11. (C) Comment: It is unclear to what extent Atta's elaborate terms for a power-sharing arrangement with the Karzai administration represent Abdullah's thinking on the issue. Atta's senior political advisor, Zalmai Yonusi, had earlier mentioned to PRT officers that Atta personally had given more thought to a coalition government structure than some Abdullah camp purists. It is clear that Atta, as an appointed governor who broke with the Karzai camp in endorsing Abdullah, has much to lose if a Karzai victory is declared in the first round.

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